



Federal Lands Transportation Program Fact Sheet

Economic Benefits of Transportation Investment

Access to and within the National Park System has been a defining experience for generations of visitors.

The National Park Service (NPS) coordinates the planning and implementation of transportation systems that improve the visitor experience and care for national parks by:

- Preserving natural and cultural resources.
- Enhancing visitor safety and security.
- Protecting plant and animal species.
- Reducing congestion.
- Decreasing pollution.

NPS is committed to being a leader in pursuing strategies that can help make park units more enjoyable, cleaner, quieter, and more sustainable for present and future generations.

For more information, visit nps.gov/transportation

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National Parks attract nearly 300 million annual visitors who spend billions of dollars and support thousands of jobs in neighboring communities. Transportation systems support this relationship by connecting visitors and employees to parks and nearby towns. Transportation investments are required to maintain access and enable ongoing economic exchange.

Transportation in National Parks

Roads, parking lots, buses, trams, ferries, bikeways, and walking trails are all components of transportation systems in National Parks, and are essential to their vitality. High-capacity parking lots and shuttle buses support increased rates of visitation at destination parks such as Grand Canyon and Yosemite. Alternative Transportation Systems, including biking and walking facilities connecting with surrounding communities, open access to visitors without automobiles at parks such as Aztec Ruins and San Antonio Missions. Transportation assets can also be key attractions; examples are Cuyahoga Valley's bikeways and Glacier Park's Going-to-the-Sun Road.

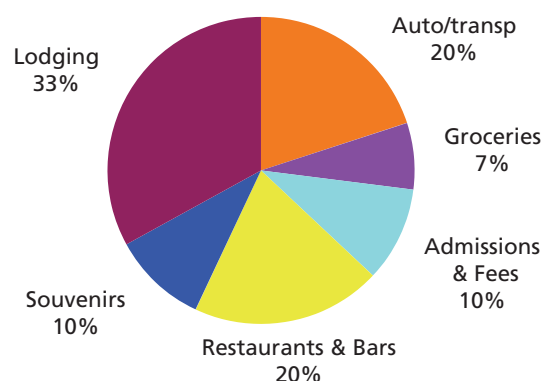
Economic Impact

Transportation investments have both direct and indirect impacts on the surrounding economy. Visitors depend on the NPS transportation system to access and enjoy national park sites, as well as local shops, restaurants, lodging, and other tourist attractions.

In addition, employees use park roads and buses to access jobs and carry out daily tasks. Other related economic benefits related to transportation include road rehabilitation projects, design and construction work, and transit services, which employ vehicle operators and maintenance staff.

- For every tax dollar invested in the National Park Service system, an estimated four dollars in economic activity is generated to the public.¹
- In 2013, visitor spending amounted to \$14.6 billion and supported over 237,000 related jobs in and around national parks.²

Visitor Spending Distribution in 2013²



The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor draws hundreds of cyclists each season. (Photo courtesy of the BlackstoneValleyCorridor.org)

Economic Benefits of Transportation Investments

NPS Transportation Investments

The primary source of funding for NPS transportation investments is provided through the Federal Lands Transportation Program from appropriations under the Highway Trust Fund, administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The United States invests approximately \$240 million annually into the NPS transportation system. Additional investments are provided through various transportation-related discretionary program awards as they become available, particularly through partnership efforts. The NPS invests its own funds in repair and maintenance projects. These funds generally come from NPS construction and maintenance programs, as well as from parking fees and park entrance fees.

NPS Transportation Investment Examples



Small shuttle buses take visitors to Glacier National Park over the Going To The Sun Highway.

Glacier National Park

The Going-to-the-Sun Road, a National Historic and Civil Engineering Landmark, is the only road that crosses Glacier National Park and carries visitors to unparalleled vistas in Northwest Montana. As one of the highlights of the park, over 80% of the park's 2.1 million annual visitors travel the roadway. After concerns over extreme weather conditions and the need for preservation of the road for future generations, a multi-year collaborative rehabilitation effort was initiated in 2007 by the NPS and FHWA. Together, preventative repairs along the roadway are being made to ensure the roadway can be used and enjoyed by future generations.

In 2013, Glacier National Park generated \$226 million in visitor spending and supported more than 2,800 jobs.²

Acadia National Park

Located along the coast of Maine and Mount Desert Island, heavy private vehicle traffic in Acadia National Park can degrade visitor experience and overwhelm local parking lots. In 1999, the Island Explorer bus service began providing visitors fare-free service for route options between various community resources and park destinations. The service was developed and has been made possible through a multi-partnership effort funded through multiple sources, including NPS, federal, local, and private entities. The buses have helped relieve competition for limited parking spaces and have helped local businesses to expand service capacity and support economic growth.

In 2013, Acadia National Park generated \$251 million in visitor spending and supported more than 2,900 jobs.²



Island Explorer buses keeps up to 88,000 motor vehicles off the roads of Acadia National Park each year. (NPS Photo)



Denali National Park (DENA) shuttle buses carry visitors over roads closed to personal motor vehicles (NPS Photo)

Denali National Park & Preserve

The Denali Park Road is the only road traversing the six million acre landscape for visitors to see and experience. The first 15 miles of this 92 mile roadway is paved and open to public (non-commercial) vehicles and can quickly become overwhelmed by private vehicle traffic. To minimize natural resource impacts, the remaining roadway is restricted to only bus, bicycle, or access by foot. Bus service, provided through a concessioner, includes either a shuttle with regular stops or a tour bus with an interpretive feature. Bus ridership accounts for nearly 80% of all trips made in the park. An unexpected benefit of decreasing the volume of traffic on the roads was an increased frequency of wildlife sightings by visitors.³

In 2013, Denali National Park & Preserve generated \$719 million in visitor spending and supported 6,992 jobs.²

1. Hardner, Jared & McKenney, Bruce. "The US National Park System: An Economic Asset at Risk." Hardner & Gullison, 30 May 2006.

2. Cullinane Thomas, C., C. Huber, and L. Koontz. 2014. 2013 National Park Visitor Spending Effects: Economic Contributions to Local Communities, States, and the Nation. National Park Service. Fort Collins, CO.

3. Dunning, Anne. "Economic Impacts on Gateway Communities Resulting from the Introduction of Transit in Parks." Georgia Institute of Technology, July 2004.